



CUSTODIA TERRÆ SANCTÆ

Jerusalem, Holy Easter 2026

Dear brother, dear sister who loves the Holy Land,

every year, as Holy Week approaches, our gaze and our hearts return to the land where the Son of God became man and loved "to the end" (Jn 13:1), giving his life "for his friends" (Jn 15:13). It is here that the Paschal Mystery took shape in history, and it is from this event of death and resurrection that the Church was born, sustained by the Holy Spirit and enabled to endure persecution, crisis, and tribulation.

It is from this Paschal source that the Custody of the Holy Land continues to draw meaning and hope for its service, even in difficult times like the ones we are experiencing.

The last few years have been particularly difficult for the Christian communities of the Middle East. The war has brought death, destruction, and fear, not only to Gaza, but also to the West Bank, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. The suffering caused by the conflict has been compounded by the prolonged absence of pilgrims, which has exacerbated an already profound economic and employment crisis. Many Christian families, who once relied on the Holy Places and pilgrimage-related activities, are now experiencing great difficulty.

We have just concluded the Jubilee Year of Hope, and hope itself appears to be damaged: in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Northern Israel, as well as in the Christian communities of Lebanon and Syria. The lack of security and employment makes it increasingly difficult to support families and, even more so, to imagine a future for young people and the new generations.

In this context, the words of the Holy Father, who in the audience of August 27, 2025, called upon the entire Church to urgently pray and fast for peace, resonate with particular force: "Last Friday we accompanied with prayer and fasting our brothers and sisters who suffer because of wars... Today I return to make a strong appeal for an end to the conflict in the Holy Land, which has caused so much terror, destruction, and death" (Pope Leo XIV).

In light of this appeal, Good Friday takes on an even deeper meaning. Fasting and the Pontifical Collection Pro Terra Sancta become a concrete gesture of ecclesial communion and solidarity with the Mother Church of Jerusalem. Through this Collection, it is possible to support schools, parishes, charitable works, social projects, and emergency interventions, keeping the Christian presence alive in the places where Christianity was born.



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Today, more than ever, it is urgent to rebuild not only buildings and infrastructure, but also relationships, trust, and hope. This journey necessarily begins with education: schools, young people, families, and places where a culture of encounter, dialogue, and peace can flourish. Supporting education means investing in the future of the Holy Land and in the role of Christian communities as a leaven of reconciliation in a society marked by divisions and deep wounds.

On Good Friday, as we contemplate the Crucifix, we ask you not to forget the Holy Land, to remember in prayer and concrete charity those who continue to live and bear witness to the Gospel in the Places of Redemption. Your closeness is a precious sign of hope and fraternity: help us to give hope and sow peace!

With gratitude for your attention and generosity, we assure you of our remembrance in prayer from the Holy Places and wish everyone a joyful Easter experience as a source of new life.

With fraternal greetings and blessings.



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